

## RELATIONSHIP TO THE LOWER SUSQUEHANNA HERITAGE GREENWAY

Thirty years ago, a vision was created for a connected trail system around the three historic communities located along the Lower Susquehanna River where it flattens out to become the Chesapeake Bay. The creation of the Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway (LSHG) began in 1992 by a group of local, state, and business partners with a goal of expanding heritage tourism and recreation within the Upper Bay region. The trail system would link the City of Havre de Grace and the Towns of Perryville and Port Deposit with the vast Susquehanna State Park on the west side of the river and Bainbridge bluffs and natural areas along the east side. The beauty of the trail concept was that it would connect across the river that divided them, ideally in two locations – at the upper portion near the Conowingo Dam and at the southern, more populated area at the mouth of the Susquehanna where four bridges and traffic – both rail and automotive – traverse the Atlantic Coastal Plain.

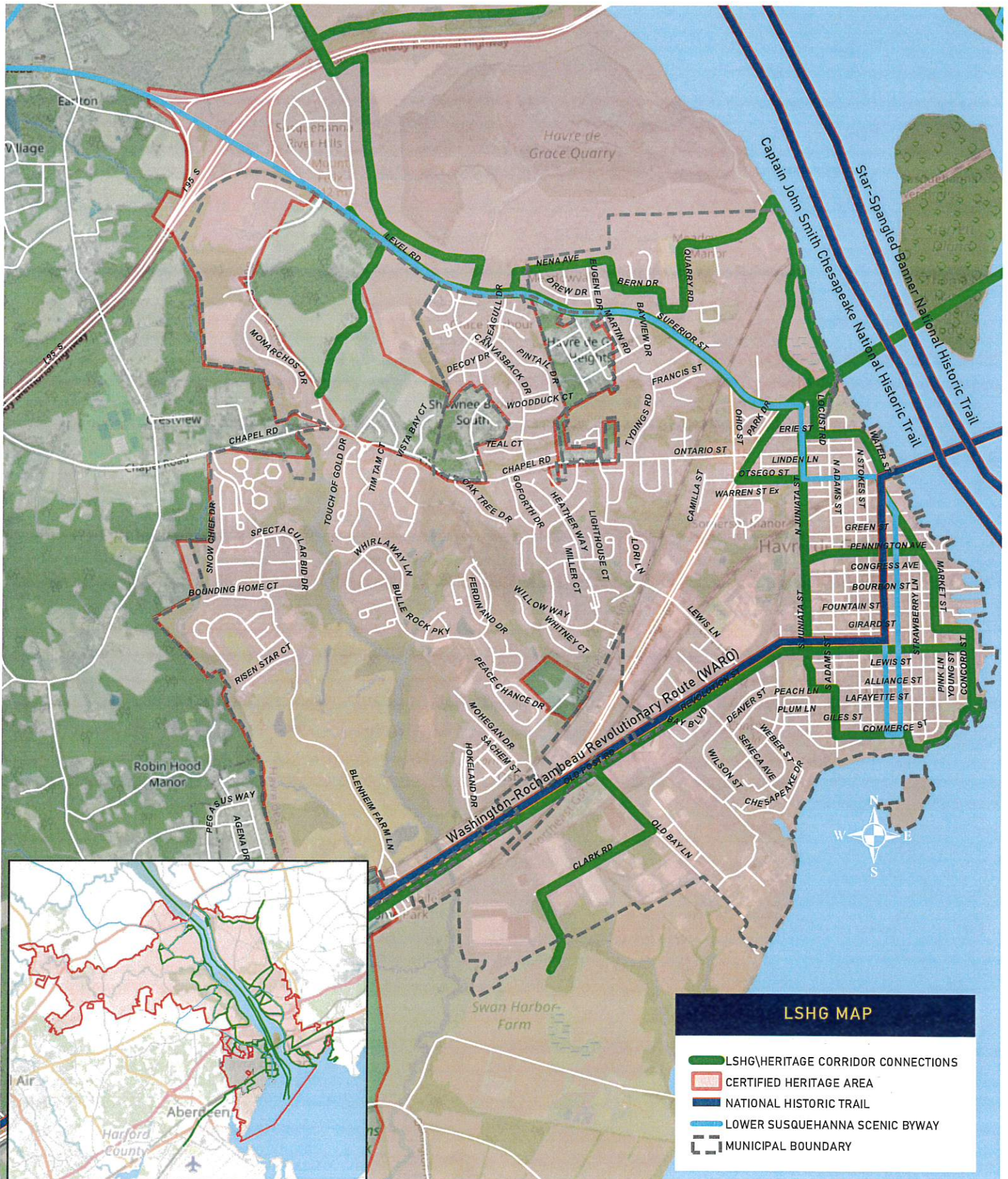
Certified as a Maryland heritage area in 2000, the LSHG is a non-profit 501c-3 organization and operates with the support of the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority (MHAA), local municipal support, and other public and private donors. This Certified Heritage Area (CHA) encompasses the villages of Darlington and Berkley, Susquehanna State Park, Vulcan Materials Company quarry operation, the City of Havre de Grace, and rural areas within Harford County on the west side of the Susquehanna River and the Towns of Port Deposit and Perryville and rural areas in Cecil County on the east side of the river. Constellation Energy Corporation (formerly Exelon) is a large land owner, providing public access to natural areas along both sides of the Susquehanna.

The area encompasses nearly 45,000 acres in Cecil and Harford Counties, extending approximately 12 miles from just north of the Conowingo Dam to the head of the Chesapeake Bay along both sides of the Susquehanna River. The Heritage Area includes over 8,400 acres of water surface on the Susquehanna River and Chesapeake Bay, and nearly 58 miles of mostly undeveloped shoreline (much of which is in state or Exelon ownership). It also includes several major stream corridors (e.g., Octoraro Creek, Conowingo Creek, and Deer Creek).

From the website  
<https://www.upperbaytrails.com/aboutus.html>



Since its inception, the LSHG has been a staple in the region, spurring public and private investment and reinvestment in the communities it incorporates, preserving resources, implementing trails, funding events, and promoting heritage tourism. Its designation as a CHA allows for competitive grant funding for capital and non-capital projects for museums, the municipalities themselves, and other



non-profits with a yearly grant cycle for capital and non-capital heritage tourism projects (up to \$50K for non-capital grants and up to \$100K for capital grants). In addition, the designations offers a heightened level of importance for Maryland Historic Revitalization Tax Credits for private property owners within its boundaries. Adopted in 2000, a twenty-five year management plan governs the development of the LSHG with implementation updates every five years.

In 1997 in answer to the concept development of the LSHG, the City of Havre de Grace adopted its own Heritage Corridor Management Plan that governed its local relationship to the broader LSHG vision. This chapter is intended to replace that standalone heritage corridor plan by adopting the ideals of the greenway effort within the City's Comprehensive Plan and carrying them forward. The City has benefitted greatly from the creation of the LSHG and, as a small-sized city, is a significant partner within the bigger framework. The City will continue to build on the success of the past thirty years and ideally lay the groundwork for the next decades here in this chapter.

[Map of the Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway with inset]

#### **HAVRE DE GRACE WITHIN THE LSHG**

As a historically important community and population center, Havre de Grace is a key feature within the LSHG. The converse is also true – the LSHG is a key feature within Havre de Grace, and the City has been building physical improvements around the LSHG for decades. The greenway within the City is a system of pedestrian linkages – sometime natural paths, sometimes brick-edged sidewalks – that are being constructed to connect museum and cultural resources and public lands along the waterfront and within our historic district and extending to the newer, developing areas located to the west of the historic downtown.

Within Havre de Grace to the north is a large natural area along the Susquehanna with a riverfront trail that is rimmed with steep grades, making for a challenging climb in order to proceed along the new trail around Vulcan Materials Company quarry operation and on to Susquehanna State Park. A generous land donation of three hundred acres from Constellation Energy Corporation to local jurisdictions was publicly announced in the summer of 2022. It is anticipated that Havre de Grace will be a recipient of approximately fifteen acres in the northern portion of the City. To the south are connections to large colonial-era landholdings on the Oakington Peninsula, now owned by Harford County Parks and Recreation and will be designed with passive recreation and trails. Within the City, the signature brick-ribbon sidewalk connects major portions of the waterfront, however gaps exist making this incomplete at this time. The goal is to connect Lock House Museum at the north end of the City's waterfront to the Concord Point Lighthouse and Promenade to the south.

The Heritage Corridor Plan map – which illustrates the desired physical connections from the waterfront westward through the historic areas to connect with more distant parts of the City – was adopted in the City's last comprehensive plan and is still relevant today. This map is a good illustration of the overarching approach to making connections along the waterfront with main connecting streets, like Pennington Avenue and Revolution Street.

[Heritage Corridor Plan map]

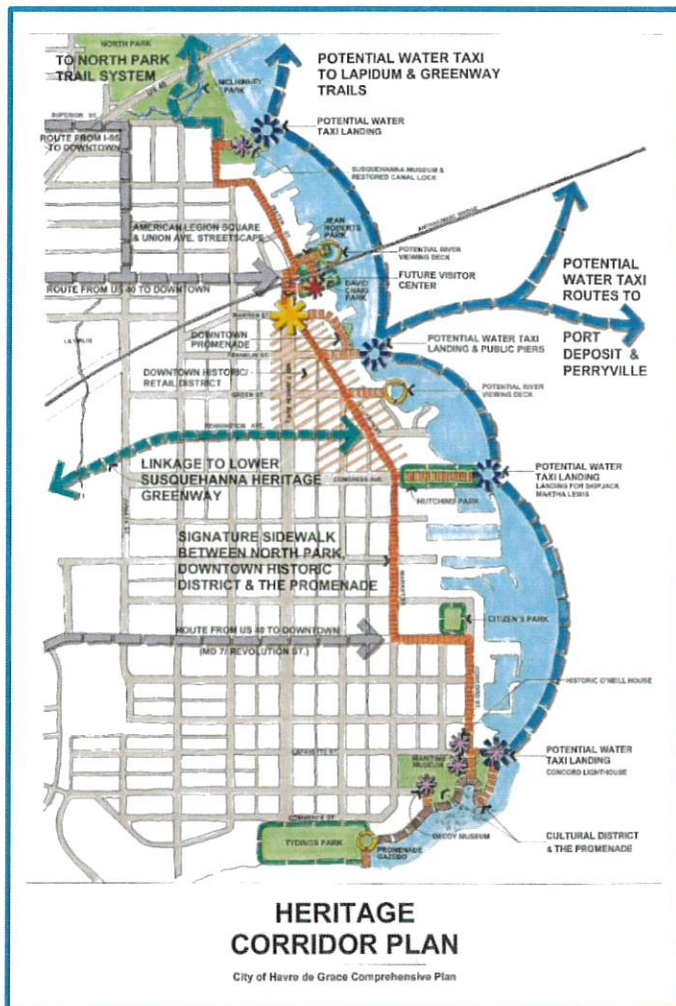


Figure 1, Heritage Corridor Plan map showing the City's signature brick sidewalk connections along the City's waterfront and main corridors radiating westward from it. This map is incorporated in the City's 2004 Comprehensive Plan and it is still relevant today. Artwork courtesy of Garden Architecture, LLC.

### **ACCOMPLISHMENTS WITHIN HAVRE DE GRACE**

Major strides of reinvestment have been made within Havre de Grace in relation to the LSHG. MHAA grant funding has support innumerable museum and cultural projects since 2000 and was a major funding source for the Havre de Grace Colored School Foundation's acquisition of their property as well as gap funding for the renovation of the Cultural Center at the Opera House, a city-owned building to name just a few of the projects receiving funding. Yearly grant making through the LSHG has spurred restoration activities at all museums and non-profit cultural resources within the City.

Significant property acquisitions have occurred within the past ten years to extend the public access and enjoyment of the City's extensive waterfront. This includes the property shown on Concord Street immediately adjacent to the Lighthouse as well as a collection of four properties on Water Street where a recreational boat-ramp and living shoreline project are being completed. These are significant construction projects with environmental restoration and habitat improvements built into them. Continued pedestrian improvements, specifically the waterfront signature sidewalks have been incorporated in land acquisitions, like Heritage Park/Promenade extension shown here.

[Extension of Promenade, Site Resources, Inc. image]

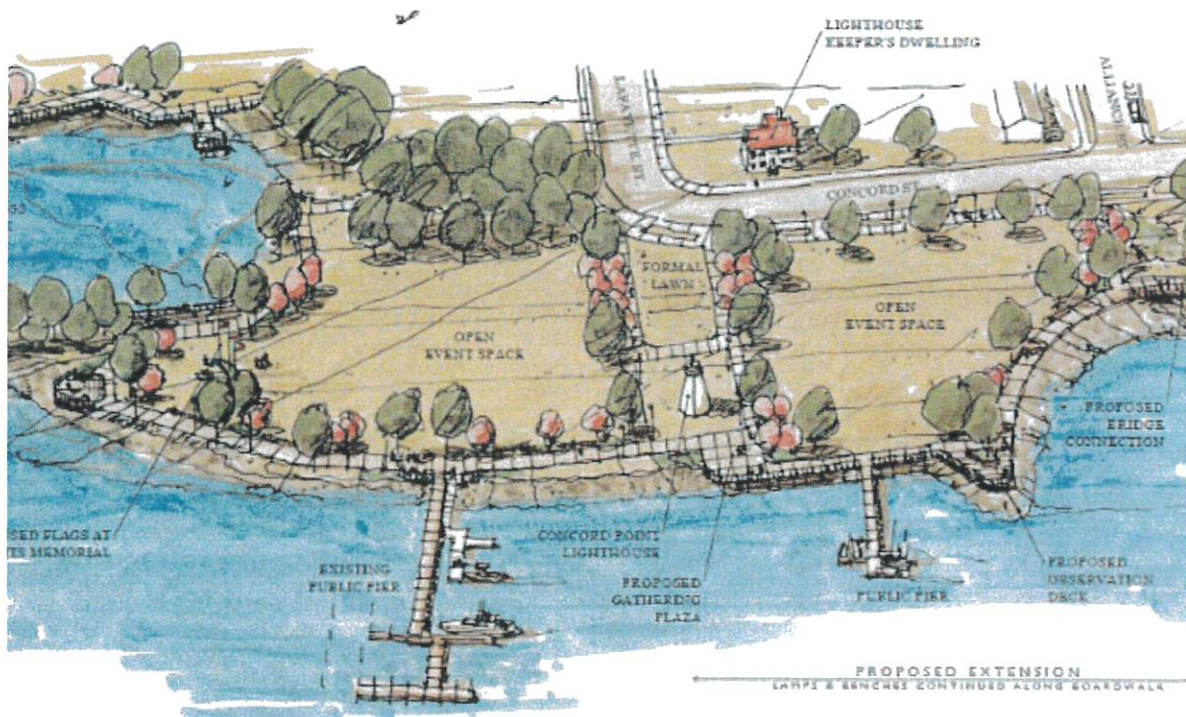


Figure 2, Concept provided by Site Resources, Inc. for the extension of the Promenade along Concord Street. The improvements were completed in 2016.

Trail connections have made great progress, most recently with the successful establishment of the trail from the North Park Loop Trail traversing the steep include to Lagaret Drive then through the Meadowvale neighborhood to Havre de Grace Ambulance Corps with the assistance of the Mason-Dixon Trail volunteers. This connects the north end of Havre de Grace to the Vulcan Quarry Trail adjacent to city-limits – which opened in spring 2022 – and ultimately to Susquehanna State Park. To the south, there is another major initiative to connect the City through an easement to Swan Harbor Farm, much of which has been cleared with the help of volunteers through Boy Scouts and Harford Running Club. Substantial wetland areas need to be forged with constructed boardwalks before they will be truly open for public access and

the City is working with Harford County Parks and Recreation for how control of this access will function.

#### **MORE WORK TO BE DONE TO CREATE CONNECTIONS**

Much work is remains to be done, especially the need for continued promotion of how important heritage tourism is to the regional economy. In addition, the steady, continued development of the trail system linking the important cultural assets is the Lower Susquehanna/Upper Bay region is critical in seeing the vision become reality. The LSHG was a contributing partner in the National Park Service Lower Susquehanna River Segment Implementation Plan. This is a very detail plan of the Lower Susquehanna River from Harrisburg, PA to the mouth of the Susquehanna River here in Havre de Grace includes three National Historic Trails that intersect in the Upper Bay:

- Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail
- Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail
- Washington-Rochambeau National Historic Trail

The celebration of historic and cultural resources and the interpretation of the City's historic context is imperative for economic development that lends itself to revitalization.

Grant cycles for all museums and cultural resources continues to be paramount for the continued improvement of these important historical structures and attractions. Assists with strengthening heritage tourism, interpretation, and understanding of the history of an area. Continued development of public parkland with sidewalks and trail connections between these museums round out the opportunity for making the City a great place.

Continued regional collaboration through quarterly meetings of regional partners is greatly desired. The sharing of information and mutual support of the museums within the LSHG region creates a critical mass to get much accomplished over time. Whether its trail clearing, interpretation, and the visitor experience, much of which comes through from the effort of generous volunteers. The importance of volunteer contribution cannot be overstated and has kept the mission of the LSHG alive.

One of the most ambitious efforts of the LSHG is the continued focus on the development of a Susquehanna River crossing, ideally from Havre de Grace to the Town of Perryville. This idea was incorporated in the *Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway Management Plan* in 2000 and there was an initial feasibility study for a crossing in 2002. Now that the Amtrak Susquehanna River Rail Bridge will be replaced with two new bridges within the next decade, it has taken on a heightened focus. The rail bridge project presents the greatest opportunity to see the vision become a reality, and it is critical that the LSHG and its partners utilize this opportunity for a grade-separated bridge pathway -- a third span -- that would mirror the two new bridge profiles. This connection would not just be for the LSHG but for the 3,000 mile East Coast Greenway from Maine to Florida and the recent Congressionally-approved September 11<sup>th</sup> National Memorial Trail, which is a 1,300 mile trail that links the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and the Flight 93 Memorial here in this region.

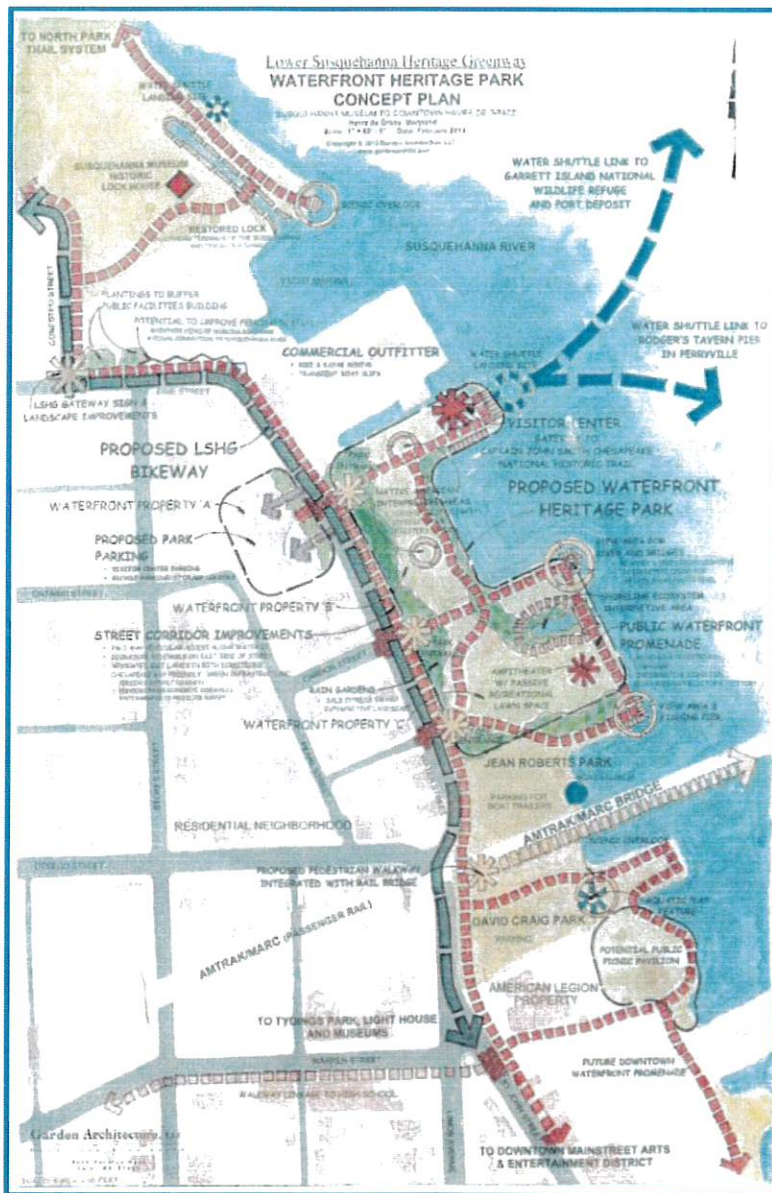


Figure 3, Concept Plan for the Water Street Heritage Park showing connecting signature sidewalks from the downtown to the Lock House Museum and grounds, water taxi options, and pedestrian link to Perryville along the Amtrak corridor.



### **VISION FOR HAVRE DE GRACE WITHIN LSHG**

*Development Havre de Grace as the main hub of activity on west side of Susquehanna River with connections to Susquehanna State Park and the vast natural areas along the river, to Oakington Peninsula with protected colonial-era farmland and premier Chesapeake Bay frontage, and to Perryville with a successful river crossing to connect population centers at the top of the Chesapeake Bay.*

**ACTION ITEMS:** [List of Action Items to be created with the Planning Commission]

#### Susquehanna River Crossing

LSHG connections across the Susquehanna River were identified in its Management Plan in 2000

Safe crossing, connecting and interpreting 3 National Historic Trails that traverse the City and the region: Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail, Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail, Washington-Rochambeau National Historic Trail

Support ECG and 9-11<sup>th</sup> National Memorial Trail through the region, specifically with the river crossing – Havre de Grace and Perryville is the optimal location, growing communities, development (Smart Growth) corridor

US Bikeway 201

#### Heritage Tourism

Continue to support LSHG in their mission (make it our mission as well)

Continued regional collaboration

Three important insets with links for this chapter:

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*ECONOMIC IMPACT STUDY*

*Please see this report, Lower Susquehanna Heritage  
Greenway Makes an Impact, by Parker Philips:  
<https://www.upperbaytrails.com/economic-impact.pdf>*

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*NATIONAL PARK SERVICE LOWER SUSQUEHANNA RIVER*

*Please see this report, Lower Susquehanna River Segment Implementation Plan  
from the National Park Service on enhancing the 3 National Trails in this region:  
[https://www.nps.gov/cajo/getinvolved/upload/LowerSusqSegPlan\\_v5.pdf](https://www.nps.gov/cajo/getinvolved/upload/LowerSusqSegPlan_v5.pdf)*

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*LSHG MANAGEMENT PLAN, 2000*

*Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway  
Management Plan link:  
<https://www.upperbaytrails.com/management.html>*

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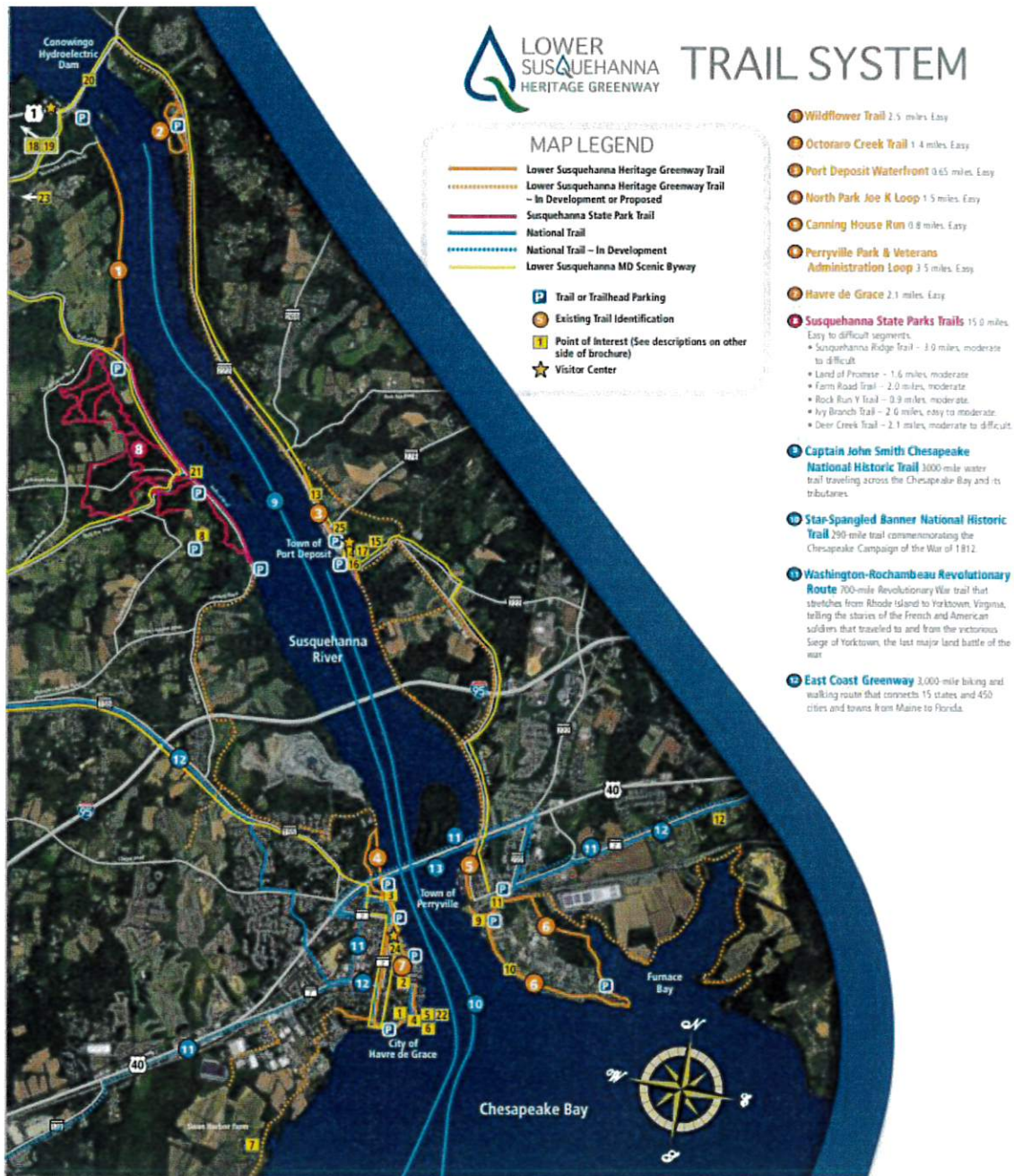


Figure 3, Map of the Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway brochure which shows the connections between 3 National Trails, the East Coast Greenway, Lower Susquehanna Scenic Byway, and the LSHG. Twenty-five museums and other points of interest are described within the brochure.

[Need for photos of the Pride II in town, i.e. trails, National Trail Day and Riversweep events, etc.]

## The Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway

### As part of its mission the LSHG aims to:

- Create a premier, world class land and water-based trail system to explore the natural and cultural history of the Lower Susquehanna River and Chesapeake Bay.
- Create greater public access to the Lower Susquehanna River and the Susquehanna Flats portion of the Chesapeake Bay for recreational and economic opportunity by acquiring land, assisting in the construction of trails, and advocating for sustainable development.
- Encourage a greater understanding of the significant role that the Lower Susquehanna and Chesapeake Bay and its people have played in U.S. history, awakening a local sense of pride in place.
- Foster linkages among and between the heritage attractions of the Lower Susquehanna and Chesapeake Bay's waterfront communities by providing unique visitor experiences that encourage the public to explore, learn, and enjoy the diverse offerings.
- To provide leadership, technical assistance, and advocacy to guide land use decisions that enhance our quality of life by supporting expanded recreation and economic opportunities, and to promote a sustainable healthy lifestyle.

Key partners of the LSHG include small and large businesses and landowners, Harford and Cecil Counties, the Towns of Port Deposit and Perryville, the City of Havre de Grace, and Susquehanna State Park. Other important partners include the village of Darlington, local museums, and civic and business organizations.

### Program goals of the LSHG are:

- To enhance the visitor appeal and enjoyment of the state's history, culture, natural environment, and scenic beauty by enhancing the overall 'product' – the visitor experience.
- To increase the economic activity associated with tourism, creating opportunities for small business development, job growth, and a stronger tax base.
- To encourage preservation and adaptive re-use of historic buildings, conservation of natural areas important to the state's character and environment, and the continuity and authenticity of cultural arts, heritage attractions and traditions indigenous to the region.
- To enable Marylanders and visitors alike to have greater access to and understanding of the history and traditional cultures of the state and to understand the important events that took place here.
- To foster linkages among and between heritage attractions that encourage visitors to explore, linger, and sample the diverse offerings of the state's distinctive regions.
- To balance the impact of tourism activity with the quality of life enjoyed by residents.
- To accomplish these goals via partnerships among local and regional leaders, non-profit organizations, businesses, and state agencies.

Lastly, but most importantly, we strive to improve the economic condition and quality of life for those who live on the most treasured of our nation's natural resources, the Chesapeake Bay.

From the LSHG website: [www.upperbaytrails.com](http://www.upperbaytrails.com)